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# **Egypt: Prospects for the Opposition**

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**An Intelligence Assessment**

State Dept. review completed

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*NESA 82-10314  
July 1982*

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# **Egypt: Prospects for the Opposition**

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## **An Intelligence Assessment**

*Information available as of 2 July 1982  
has been used in the preparation of this report.*

This assessment was prepared by [redacted]  
the Office of Near East-South Asia Analysis.  
Comments and queries are welcome and may be  
addressed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, NESA,

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This paper has been coordinated with the National  
Intelligence Council and with the Directorate of  
Operations. [redacted]

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**Key Judgments**

Egypt's various opposition groups are preparing to take a more active role in the country's politics after a period of relative quiet following Sadat's assassination last October. These groups charge that President Mubarak's government has failed to come to grips with Egypt's massive social and economic problems. They accuse Mubarak of maintaining overly close ties with the United States and Israel and with failing to protest adequately the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the US Government's alleged unwillingness to halt Israeli attacks on the PLO. In the months ahead we believe the opposition will attract growing numbers of supporters as disillusionment with Mubarak spreads but will not become strong enough to seize power.

The most significant opposition group is the 50-year-old Muslim Brotherhood, which may have a half-million members. The Brotherhood is dominated by an older, conservative leadership that prefers to avoid direct confrontations with the regime. It has tacitly accepted a working relationship with Mubarak in order to keep Islamic dissidence within limits. We lack information on the attitudes of younger Brotherhood officials, but they may be more eager to confront the regime, perhaps even violently, if serious disturbances occur over social and economic grievances.

Extremist Islamic groups, including those involved in Sadat's assassination, remain capable of isolated acts of violence and may seek ties with foreign states to improve their capabilities. Although they have penetrated the military to a limited extent, they lack sufficient support to seize power.

The left is fairly small and is composed largely of disaffected intellectuals. It has organizational talents, however, that could aid other dissidents if the opposition coalesces during a period of serious unrest.

A major growth in opposition influence would most likely occur if Egypt's economic problems spark a repetition of the riots of January 1977. Even then the military probably would step in to maintain order.

Even a gradual increase in opposition activity will affect US interests since almost all dissident groups oppose the Camp David peace process and the US-Egyptian military relationship. Increased opposition activity will make it more difficult for Mubarak to accelerate US-Egyptian strategic cooperation or accept compromises in the Palestinian autonomy negotiations with Israel.

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**Political Honeymoon Ending**

Egyptian politics are becoming more unsettled as the shock of last October's events wears off. The various opposition groups lowered their profile after the assassination of President Sadat for several reasons. Moderate oppositionists have told US officials that they avoided harsh criticism of Mubarak in order to give him an opportunity to restore order in the country. They also did not want to take actions that might have given Israel an excuse not to complete its withdrawal from the Sinai peninsula. Extremist organizations, including Islamic radicals and Communists, have been on the defensive because of Sadat's and Mubarak's efforts to restrict their activities.

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Mubarak's political honeymoon is now slowly coming to an end. To some extent this was unavoidable as Mubarak confronted Egypt's problems and made controversial decisions. Nonetheless, while many Egyptians are satisfied by his performance to date, Mubarak has failed to transform his initial popularity into deep personal loyalty.

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a growing number of Egyptians doubt that Mubarak is of the same caliber as his predecessors, Nasir and Sadat, or that he can deal effectively with Egypt's many social, economic, and political problems. Egyptians are increasingly disappointed that Mubarak has not articulated a program to ease these problems. His lack of firm action has caused some to describe him as indecisive or even cowardly.

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Mubarak's handling of the Lebanon crisis has probably reinforced these doubts. Egyptian opposition groups have publicly criticized the government for not protesting the Israeli invasion more strongly. Several small demonstrations have been held in Cairo protesting the invasion and Mubarak's handling of the crisis. Mubarak's dramatic visit to Saudi Arabia to express condolences for King Khalid's death, however, may have softened the impact of the Lebanese events.

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So far the credibility issue is not acute and does not threaten Mubarak's hold on power. We believe most Egyptians are still willing to give him more time to address the nation's problems.

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many remain pleased with his low-key style of leadership, which they contrast with Sadat's often flamboyant manner. Nonetheless, dissatisfaction with Mubarak—especially his perceived indecisiveness—is growing and offers the opposition opportunities to gain adherents.

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**Mubarak's Policy**

Since he took power last October, Mubarak has used a carrot-and-stick approach toward the opposition. He has sought to co-opt moderate groups like the small secular parties represented in parliament and the conservative Islamic leadership by consulting with them on national issues and by allowing them greater freedom to operate. Mubarak has reversed Sadat's blanket ban on opposition newspapers and has freed many of the politicians arrested during Sadat's crackdown on dissent last September.

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At the same time Mubarak has pursued a tough line toward radical organizations. He has arrested many Communists and members of extremist Islamic

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groups, including the Takfir wal-Hijra and Jihad organizations implicated in Sadat's death. Mubarak also approved the controversial court decision to execute Sadat's assassins. [ ] 25X1

In broader terms Mubarak has urged his opponents to exercise discipline and to play a responsible opposition role. He has stressed his commitment to democracy while warning that excesses will be dealt with harshly. He has met often with opposition leaders and urged them to work with him to overcome Egypt's problems. [ ] 25X1

It is too early to tell how successful his "jawboning" will be, but there is little tradition in Egypt of Western-style opposition politics. Already the opposition press is beginning to criticize harshly some of Mubarak's policies and supporters. One dissident newspaper published a scathing attack on Defense Minister Abu Ghazala in May, and several have lambasted Mubarak's handling of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. There is probably a better-than-even chance that Mubarak will eventually become disenchanted with the opposition. He may then be tempted to crack down on dissent or reshape Egyptian politics by forming new political parties. [ ] 25X1

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### Opposition Issues

The goals of Egypt's various opposition groups differ greatly, but an analysis of opposition literature shows their complaints about government policy are similar. Although they differ about how to solve Egypt's problems, most opposition groups agree that the current regime has three main shortcomings: it is to blame for the country's economic difficulties, it maintains overly close ties to the United States and Israel to the detriment of relations with the Arab world, and it restricts political freedoms. [ ] 25X1

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### The Economy

Criticism of economic shortcomings probably has greater appeal than any other issue for most Egyptians. The country's rapidly expanding population (44 million and growing by 100,000 monthly) has severely strained the nation's economy and social structure.

Housing shortages are endemic in the large cities, especially Cairo, where millions live in slums; and basic services like public transport, sewage facilities, and schools are overburdened. [ ] 25X1

These problems are particularly acute for the nation's young. Half the population is under 19, and many young Egyptians worry that they face a life of overcrowded slums and unfulfilling employment. Thousands are already searching for relief by working abroad in the Persian Gulf countries. Egyptian authorities claim that over 2 million Egyptians currently work abroad. Some return to Egypt with new political ideas and heightened expectations for a better life. [ ] 25X1

Critics of Sadat and Mubarak argue that their policies have only worsened Egypt's economic problems. Many charge that Sadat's "Open-Door" economic policy, which sought to stimulate foreign investment in Egypt, benefited only a handful of wealthy entrepreneurs and did little to improve the life of the masses. Some claim the Open Door stimulated greater corruption among government officials and deepened class and social cleavages, thereby reversing Nasir's efforts to move toward social equity. [ ] 25X1

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### The US and Israeli Connection

Egypt's growing ties with the United States and Washington's role in brokering the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty have become a second major focus for dissent. We believe that few Egyptians want to resume belligerency with Israel, but many have become increasingly disenchanted with the Camp David process and the US role in negotiating a settlement with Israel. Many fear that Sadat—at US behest—accepted a separate peace with Israel that has helped consolidate Israeli control over Jerusalem and the occupied territories and given Israel a free hand to invade Lebanon. Very few Egyptians believe the autonomy negotiations will resolve the Palestinian problem. [ ] 25X1

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Sadat's offers to allow the United States to utilize Egyptian military facilities—supported by Mubarak—have also become a prime source of dissident criticism. Despite protests by both US and Egyptian officials that use of the facilities does not

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25X1 constitute the creation of American military bases, the US Embassy in Cairo reports that many Egyptians fear their country's sovereignty is being undermined. Some recall the British colonial presence and charge that Sadat and Mubarak have sacrificed Egypt's independence by closely aligning the country with "US imperialism." [redacted]

Both leftist and Islamic critics of the regime publicly argue that close ties to Washington have undermined Egypt's nonaligned foreign policy role. Mubarak has sought to counter these charges by taking a more active interest in the nonaligned movement and by improving the tone of Egyptian-Soviet relations. Opposition critics allege that these moves are only window dressing and that Mubarak in fact has strengthened Egypt's alignment with the United States. [redacted]

#### Political Freedom

25X1 The third major focus of criticism revolves around opposition demands for a liberalized political system. Critics publicly charge that the regime fails to allow any significant political activity by oppositionists. They note that the ruling National Democratic Party controls 365 seats in the 392-member People's Assembly, making the parliament a rubberstamp for Mubarak's policies. They also charge, with some accuracy, that the electoral system is not truly free and that NDP candidates have traditionally been aided by unfair government practices, such as sharply limiting the opposition's right to nominate candidates for local office [redacted]

Some dissident intellectuals have also publicly urged that Mubarak fundamentally alter the country's political system by reducing his own powers as President. The oppositionists say Egypt should have a parliamentary form of government under which the President would be answerable to the legislature [redacted]

25X1 Even those opposition groups that do not call for a drastic overhaul of the political system have publicly demanded that Mubarak move faster to broaden freedom of the press, release more of the remaining 3,000 political prisoners, and end the state of emergency imposed after Sadat's death. In time there may also be growing demands for fairer elections to the People's Assembly [redacted]

Table 1

#### Party Representation in the People's Assembly

Party	Seats
National Democratic Party	365
Socialist Liberal Party	2
Socialist Labor Party	11
Independents	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>392</b>

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#### A Divided Movement

The Egyptian opposition is not monolithic, and there is little cooperation among its various elements. While some leftist parties have long sought greater unity of effort, Islamic groups have traditionally eschewed cooperation with the left or even with centrist secular parties. [redacted]

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In addition, analysis of opposition literature shows there is no agreement on how to resolve Egypt's problems. Islamic groups argue that a return to Islamic values and traditional ways of governing will transform the economy, revive traditional ways of life, and strengthen the nation's foreign policy. Few Islamic thinkers have enunciated a practical blueprint for reform, however, and most are exceedingly vague about their vision of an Islamic Egypt. Leftist groups tend to have more highly developed notions about the shape of a future state but are deeply divided among themselves over whether it should have a Nasirite, Communist, or even Maoist coloration. [redacted]

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The opposition also lacks a charismatic leader who might be able, at least temporarily, to submerge long-term differences in order to confront the regime more effectively. None of the major opposition spokesmen, either on the left or from the Islamic movement, have developed a broad national audience. Some Islamic figures, such as the blind Cairo preacher Shaykh Kishk, have developed a popular following, but none appears to have the potential of becoming a figure like Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. [redacted]

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Table 2

## Major Egyptian Opposition Groups

	Orientation	Foreign Ties	Leader/Spokesman
<b>Legal Parties</b>			
Socialist Liberal Party	Centrist	None known	Kamal Murad
Socialist Labor Party	Moderate left	None known	Ibrahim Shukri
National Progressive Unionist Grouping	Nasirist	USSR	Khalid Muhyi-al-Din
<b>Illegal Groups</b>			
Muslim Brotherhood	Largest Islamic group, moderate	Saudi Arabia	Umar al-Talmasani
Islamic Societies	Student groups	None known	
Takfir wal-Hijra	Extremist Islamic	None known	
Al-Jihad Al-Jadid	Extremist Islamic	None known	
Communist Party	Communist	USSR, South Yemen	Michel Kamil
National Front	Leftist exile group	Libya, Syria, Algeria, South Yemen	Saad Shazli

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**Legal Parties**

Egypt has three legal opposition political parties, the Socialist Liberal Party, the Socialist Labor Party, and the National Progressive Unionist Grouping. The first two hold a few seats in the People's Assembly. (Labor has 11, and the Liberals have two.) None is a threat to the regime's hold on power and none has a mass following, but the legal parties express the concerns and frustrations of many Egyptians through their public criticism of the regime. [REDACTED]

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The *Socialist Liberal Party*, like the other two parties, was created in 1979 when Sadat allowed the first multiparty Egyptian elections in 27 years. Led by Mustafa Kamal Murad, the Liberals are a vaguely rightwing organization that often backs the government in parliament. It is the weakest of the three legal parties and is widely seen as little more than a front for the regime. [REDACTED]

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The *Socialist Labor Party* is a much more active organization. It recently resumed publishing its newspaper *Ash-Shaab*, which was banned by Sadat last September. Led by Ibrahim Shukri, the Labor Party is a moderately leftist group. Since Sadat's death

Mubarak has met often with Shukri and has sought to persuade the Labor Party to tacitly back the regime. As a result, its attacks on Mubarak have been fairly circumspect. [REDACTED]

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The Labor Party has been plagued by a series of defections in recent months, and several of its parliamentary delegates have left the party to become independents. Some party members have quietly expressed unhappiness to US officials over Shukri's willingness to work with Mubarak. These party members believe the SLP should take a more vigorous opposition stance. It remains unclear whether Shukri will move toward becoming a tame oppositionist or will seek to make the party a more active platform for dissent. [REDACTED]

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The *National Progressive Unionist Grouping* is probably the most important legal opposition party. [REDACTED] Sadat feared its leftist appeal enough to manipulate the

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25X1 results of the elections in 1979 so that it won no seats. He regularly banned its two publications, *Al-Ahali* and *Al-Taqqadum*, but both have begun to reappear irregularly. [redacted]

25X1 The NPUG is headed by Khalid Muhyi-al-Din, who was among the "Free Officers" who carried out the revolution in 1952 that eventually brought Nasir to power. Known as the "Red Major" because of his leftist views, Muhyi-al-Din has long had close ties to Moscow and visited the USSR as recently as March 1981. [redacted]

25X1 The NPUG's principal criticism of the Sadat and Mubarak regimes has centered on foreign policy issues. Muhyi-al-Din espouses a return to Nasir-style nonalignment and is a strong critic of US-Egyptian relations and the Camp David process. On economic issues the NPUG is socialist-oriented. [redacted]

25X1 The party claims to have 150,000 members, but party leaders have privately admitted to US officials that its hardcore membership is much smaller. According to a US academic study of the NPUG in 1980, it appeals primarily to intellectuals, and outside of Muhyi-al-Din's home province it has failed to attract significant rural or worker support. On the other hand, the NPUG has demonstrated the strong organizational abilities that the other two legal parties lack. [redacted]

25X1 The legal opposition parties do not represent a serious threat to the Mubarak regime because of their limited appeal, small numbers, and in some instances, lack of commitment. They serve as fairly safe vehicles for propaganda, however, and the NPUG may be able to play an organizational role in assisting other opposition groups during a period of domestic upheaval. [redacted]

### Semilegal Groups

The largest and most important opposition group in Egypt is the Muslim Brotherhood or Ikhwan. Founded in 1928 by a schoolteacher, Hassan al-Banna, the Ikhwan has played a major role in Egyptian politics for 50 years. Today it has perhaps as many as a half-million members, and millions of other Egyptians sympathize with its ideology. [redacted] 25X1

During most of the Sadat era, the Muslim Brotherhood was tolerated and even tacitly supported by the President, who saw it as a useful balance to Communist and Nasirite influence. The Ikhwan's periodical, *Ad-Dawa* appeared regularly, and its publisher, Umar al-Talmasani, was widely viewed as a supporter of many of Sadat's policies. The Brotherhood opposed the Camp David agreement, however, and became increasingly critical of the regime in the early 1980s. Sadat made the Ikhwan a key target of his crackdown in September 1981, banning *Ad-Dawa* and arresting Talmasani. [redacted] 25X1

Mubarak has sought to resume the tacit cooperation between the regime and the Ikhwan. He freed Talmasani and other Ikhwan leaders and may soon allow them to resume publishing their journal. [redacted]

[redacted] Most of its top figures—there apparently is no single leader—are older men with strong memories of their years in prison or exile during the Nasir era. [redacted] 25X1 they generally prefer accommodation to confrontation. [redacted]

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[redacted]

Ideologically the Brotherhood favors a return to Islamic values and Islamic law. While critical of the United States and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, it is also strongly anti-Soviet and has been in the forefront of Egyptian groups sending aid to the Afghan insurgents. Its conservative leadership in recent years had disclaimed any interest in seizing power by force and has emphasized educating the masses in Islamic values. [redacted]

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The Brotherhood is linked with several student organizations that propagate Islamic beliefs in Egyptian universities. These groups, known as Islamic Societies, have dominated political activity on Egypt's campuses for years. [redacted]

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Critical unknowns about the Brotherhood include the views and attitudes of its middle-level leadership and the role of younger and presumably more activist figures in its decisionmaking. Many leaders of the more extreme Islamic groups began their careers in the Ikhwan and left out of disgust with its conservative approach to politics. It is unclear whether the next generation of Brotherhood leaders will be as willing as Talmasani has been to work with Egypt's rulers. [redacted]

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In any case, the Brotherhood has the potential to play a key role. Should the Mubarak regime face serious unrest over economic issues, the Ikhwan's attitude could be critical. If it came out against the regime, it has the organizational ability to generate serious domestic protests. [redacted]

[redacted] Ikhwan members played a key role in mobilizing crowds during the riots over bread price increases in January 1977, although Sadat, to avoid a confrontation with the Islamic movement, chose to blame the left instead. [redacted]

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#### Illegal Islamic Extremists

As noted earlier, several more extreme Islamic groups have emerged from disaffected elements of the Ikhwan. These radicals organized the assassination of President Sadat and the subsequent short-lived uprising in Asyut. [redacted]

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Radical Islamic elements were also responsible for an armed attack on Cairo's military academy in 1974 and the kidnaping and murder of a former cabinet minister in 1977. The extremist organizations have also been implicated in several incidents of anti-Coptic violence in the last few years, including attacks on churches and a four-day riot in a Cairo slum in June 1981. [redacted]

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Studies by Egyptian academics show that the Islamic extremists draw most of their recruits from students. Of the 302 extremists indicted in connection with Sadat's assassination, over half were students and several were teachers. Most are drawn to the Islamic fringe out of frustration with Egypt's social and economic problems. They also are strong opponents of the Egyptian-Israeli peace process and close ties to the United States. [redacted]

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**Islamic Terrorist Ideology**

*The following extract is from **The Hidden Obligation**, a pamphlet that served as a basic ideological statement for the Jihad organization that was implicated in President Sadat's assassination.*

*"Egypt's rulers of this age are in a state of apostasy from Islam. They have been nurtured at the tables of Christian, Communist, or Zionist colonialism. They are Muslims in name only, even though they may pray and fast and claim to be Muslims. The established tradition (dictates) that the punishment of one who renounces Islam is greater than that of one who remained an infidel. Therefore, it is our doctrine that an apostate is to be killed.*

*A Muslim must prepare himself to fight for the cause of God. The Prophet says, 'God has appointed those who go out and fight for His cause. Those who go out only to fight for God because they have faith in God and in His messenger are guaranteed a place in Paradise, or God will restore them to their homes having obtained the reward or spoils which they earned.' "*

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In our judgment the Islamic extremist fringe continues to pose a significant threat to the Mubarak regime since it almost certainly can still mount acts of terrorism. Unsubstantiated rumors of plots to kill Mubarak have recently begun to circulate in Cairo. Islamic extremists probably have learned several lessons from the assassination of Sadat. They are likely to devote additional attention to organization and coordination and give higher priority to the recruitment of military personnel. In addition, there is a good chance that Egypt's Islamic extremists will accept outside support from radical states like Libya and Iran in order to counter regime efforts to suppress their activities.

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**Illegal Leftist Organizations**

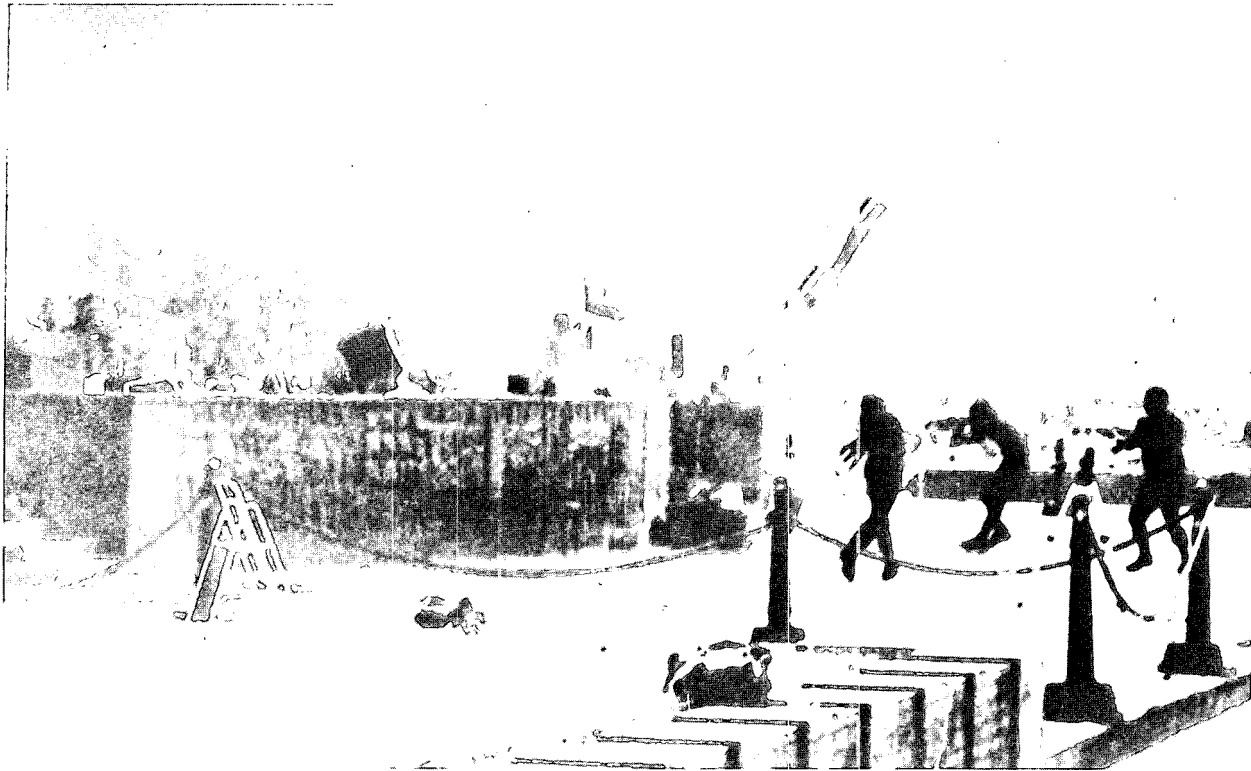
There are several Communist parties operating illegally in Egypt or among Egyptian exiles in Western Europe. Most of their followers are disaffected intellectuals. None have much popular support among Egypt's deeply Islamic masses. The most significant is the Egyptian Communist Party, founded in 1975. The party is pro-Soviet and has close ties to other pro-Soviet Communist groups in the Middle East. We believe it probably has only a few hundred members.

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*Sadat's assassination on 6 October 1981 dramatically illustrated the power of Islamic fundamentalism in Egypt.*

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The ECP's best known leader and spokesman is Michel Kamil, head of the international relations bureau of the party. A Coptic Christian, Kamil is a journalist with longstanding ties to Moscow. Frequently imprisoned during the Nasir years, he was released in the political liberalization ordered by Sadat in the early 1970s and left Egypt in 1972. He currently lives in Paris.

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The Egyptian Communist Workers Party is a separate organization, but government officials claim it also has close ties to Moscow. Massive crackdowns on the ECWP have severely damaged the party's organization in Egypt. Several other small Communist parties apparently function primarily among Egyptian dissidents in Western Europe. The 8 January Party publishes a magazine in Paris, *Solidarity*. Another splinter faction, the Egyptian Congress of the Communist Party, publishes *Red Horizon* in Paris. A small Trotskyite group and a Maoist organization, the Revolutionary Current, also operate in exile.

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#### Exile Groups

The signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979 prompted the creation of several exile opposition groups dedicated to overthrowing Sadat and returning Egypt to confrontation with Israel. The largest and

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best known of these groups is the Egyptian National Front founded in March 1980 in Syria. Although the Front has failed to develop any support inside Egypt, it has organized leftist and Nasirist dissidents in exile.

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The Front is headed by former Egyptian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Saad Shazli. Shazli had a distinguished military record fighting with the Egyptian expeditionary force in Yemen in the 1960s and was one of the few Egyptian heroes of the 1967 war with Israel. He helped plan the attack across the Suez Canal in 1973, but he was relieved of command after the Israeli counterattack that encircled the Egyptian Third Army west of the Canal. In his memoirs, *The Crossing of the Suez*, Shazli accused Sadat of bungling the war. Shazli served briefly as Egyptian Ambassador in London and Lisbon, but he broke with Sadat after the Egyptian President's trip to Jerusalem in 1977.

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The National Front openly receives support from Syria, Libya, South Yemen, Algeria, and the Palestine Liberation Organization. Shazli lives in Algeria but travels often to other radical Arab countries and is given access to their media.

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Shazli attempted to take advantage of Sadat's assassination by calling on Libyan radio for a revolutionary upheaval, but his appeal had no effect in Egypt. Since the assassination, the Communist Party, an early backer of Shazli, has left the Front for reasons that are unclear. Shazli has maintained a relatively low profile in recent weeks, but on occasion he has strongly criticized Mubarak and may plan to increase his activities in the months ahead.

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There are numerous other small exile organizations based in Western Europe and the Arab world. Several Egyptian dissident groups in Lebanon are affiliated with various Palestinian organizations and often are funded by Libya. Iraq has long sponsored a small organization, the Vanguard Party, but it has been fairly inactive since Egyptian-Iraqi relations began to improve in 1981.

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The exile organizations are not a serious threat to the stability of the Mubarak regime, but they could carry

out isolated acts of terrorism. The Egyptian Government accuses Shazli's National Front of involvement in several abortive terrorist incidents in the past. Moreover, these organizations could serve as conduits for aid from Libya or the Soviet Union to other Egyptian opposition groups.

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### Prospects for the Opposition

Egyptian opposition groups do not appear capable of seizing power in the near term. They are too badly divided and lack charismatic leadership. In addition, none appears to have significant support within the military, the ultimate arbiter of Egyptian politics. Egyptian officials privately have expressed concern about the extent of Islamic extremist penetration of the armed forces and are trying to purge suspected radicals. They probably cannot prevent small extremist cells from operating in the military, but there is no sign that such cells have enough influence to stage a coup.

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Nonetheless, a gradual increase in opposition activity is likely in the months ahead. The more moderate groups are likely to attract increasing numbers of supporters as disillusionment with Mubarak grows. The extremist organizations remain capable of carrying out terrorist attacks and fomenting sectarian violence.

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The opposition's best chance to rapidly improve its political influence would occur if economic troubles increased dramatically. A government decision to reduce subsidies and raise prices for basic commodities would almost certainly spark a repetition of the riots of January 1977, a danger the regime is well aware of and is not likely to blunder into.

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Mubarak's actions since October indicate he will continue Sadat's policy of trying to buy domestic political tranquility by avoiding major economic reforms that could spark unrest. Egyptian officials

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admit that, over the long term, neglecting much needed reforms could lead to an even more serious domestic explosion, but they argue that Mubarak cannot take the risk of igniting a popular upheaval by reducing subsidies for consumer goods or taking other reform measures. [REDACTED]

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A more likely possibility is the outbreak of disturbances over some relatively isolated event in Cairo that rapidly escalates into major protests. Government authorities have shown by their actions that they are aware of the danger that serious protests might arise from fairly inconsequential incidents. In late May, for example, a major sewer break in a section of Cairo prompted the regime to deploy large numbers of security troops in full riot gear to deter possible unrest. [REDACTED]

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Widespread and sustained disturbances could lead to a tactical coalescence of opposition groups that would increase the danger to the regime. They could also spark a change in leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood away from the fairly conservative older generation and toward more radical activists. [REDACTED]

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#### Implications for the United States

An increase in opposition activity in Egypt would have major implications for the United States. Virtually every opposition group in Egypt is critical of the Camp David peace process and is opposed to Mubarak's offer of Egyptian military facilities to the United States. Extremists at some point could choose to target US personnel in Egypt for terrorist attacks in order to publicize their opposition to Egyptian-US military cooperation or US policy toward the Palestinian issue. [REDACTED]

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An increase in opposition activity could inhibit Mubarak from further improving US-Egyptian strategic cooperation or from accepting US-proposed compromises in the Palestinian autonomy negotiations. The possibility of an adverse domestic reaction has been a major factor in the reluctance of Sadat and Mubarak to sign a formal agreement giving the United States access to Egypt's Red Sea naval base at Ras Banas. Mubarak's concern about domestic criticism also played a role in his refusal to visit Jerusalem last February. [REDACTED]

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